der consideration of this Department. NAFED and the State MARKFED have been directed to commence purchases immediately. NAFED has purchased 1,56,854.40 Quintals of onion in Maharashtra so far.

(c) Does not arise.

Fall in production of pig iron in the country

626. SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made to ascertain the causes of fall in production of pig iron; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b) The fall in production of pig iron by the integrated steel plants in the unavoidable result of improved steel making facilities in the plants and their ability to make high value steel items from the molten metal instead of pig iron.

The solution to the problem is to produce pig iron for merchant purposes.

Private sector is being encouraged to enter the field. SAIL has also been advised to increase pig iron production during 1989-90.

Assistance for development of Tribals and Tribal areas

627. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of special central assistance released by Government for the development of tribals and tribal areas in the Seventh Five Year Plan so far;

(b) the amount of special central assistance proposed to be released during the remaining period of the Seventh Five Year Plan; and

(c) the details of strategy drawn up for that purpose during the Eighth Five Year Plan?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUMATI ORAON): (a) The amount of Special Central Assistance released to the States Union Territories for the development of tribals and tribal areas during the first four years of the Seventh Five Year Plan was Rs. 641.50 crores.

(b) An amount of Rs. 205.80 crores is proposed to be released during 1989-90 as Special Central Assistance.

(c) The Eighth Five Year Plan has not been prepared.

Number of unemployeed engineers in the country

628. SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:
DR. RATANKAR PANDEY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of unemployed engineering graduates in the country at present;

(b) whether any specific programme has been chalked out to provide jobs to all the eligible unemployed engineering graduates during the last two years, yearwise; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RADHAKRISHAN MALAVIYA): (a) The available information relates to the number of engineering graduates, including post-graduates, registered with the Employment Exchanges in the country, all of whom are not necessarily unemployed. Their number as on 30th June, 1988 was 57,865.

(b) and (c) The various programmes to provide jobs to the unemployed persons including engineers are detailed in the Seventh Five Year Plan Document.